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LETTER

TO THE

BISHOP OF LANDAFF.

(PRICE ONE SHILLING.)

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BISHOP OF LINDAHL.

(PRICE ONE SHILLING.)

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FROM A

C L E R G Y M A N

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TO THE

B I S H O P O F L A N D A F F,

ON THE SUBJECT OF

H I S L O R D S H I P ' S L E T T E R

TO THE LATE

A R C H B I S H O P O F C A N T E R B U R Y.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR J. MURRAY, NO. 32, FLEET STREET.

M D C C LXXXIII.

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MDCCXXXIII

LETTER, &c.

MY LORD,

THE Enemies of Christianity have generally at one and the same time, opposed themselves to the Religious System itself, and its Professors; with this difference only, that while they admit the purity of the former, they are unjustifiably severe on the principles and abilities of the latter; and while they decorate their infidelity with the prostituted name of Philosophy, and lay claim to the honourable appellation of Liberal-minded Men, they do not scruple to treat with the greatest illiberality an order of Men, whose learning and lives collectively, do honour to their Profession, and prove of the greatest utility to the Political Interests of their Country.

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But

But if nothing else has had that effect, I trust, your Lordship's very able and gentleman-like Answer to a certain specious Patron of Infidelity of the present Age,* has convinced him, and others of the same cast, that to judge of the Learning and Integrity of the present Clergy, from the specimens afforded in the darker Ages, previous to the revival of Learning, and the downfall of Bigotry, is no less superficial than unjust. Every rational and fair inquirer after the Truth, every man who trembled for the Religious Principles of the rising Generation (who might perhaps attempt to vindicate their apostacy by the authority of the dangerous literary character of the Modern Ad-
to conclude this following on no o'revel vider the
verfary

* The Historian alluded to, with some eloquence, much art, and more vanity, ransacks the stores of bigotry, engages the force of imagination, and employs all the powers of language to weaken the basis of Revealed Religion; and consequently to impair National Virtue, which must ever depend on the respect paid to the Truth, Authority, and Purity of the generally-received Religion. What this dangerous Author says of the Apostate Julian, may with equal justice be applied to himself: "Instead of listening
" to the proofs of Christianity with that favourable attention
" which adds weight to the most respectable evidence, he heard
" with suspicion, and disputed with obstinacy and acuteness,
" the doctrines for which he had contracted an invincible hatred."

versary of Christianity), beheld with pleasure the Pen in your Lordship's hand, and rejoiced to see so important a Cause find so able an Adyocate. Nor did they rejoice in vain: that Answer has produced the most salutary effects; and many, whose faith was staggered by the sophistical arguments, persuasive eloquence, and attic stile, of the insinuating Historian, have, by your Lordship's rational and solid refutation of them, been firmly established in their attachment to the doctrines and precepts of Christianity.

On this occasion, the Community at large is under great obligations to your Lordship; for whatever tends to promote the cause of Virtue and Religion, and to enforce the practice of the various duties of social and private life, must be productive of the greatest benefits which Society can possibly receive. But your Lordship has, in another instance, proved a well-grounded claim to the esteem of the Public, and to that of the Clergy in a more especial manner.

The subject of your Lordship's Letter to the late Archbishop of Canterbury is an interesting one: the unmerited wealth of some, and the lamentable poverty of others, of the Clergy, have long been matters of public notoriety and general complaint. I mean not, my Lord, to depreciate the characters of Dignitaries. The majority are respectable and worthy men; and when I call their wealth "*unmerited*," I only mean in a comparative view with that of the Parochial Clergy, whose learning is at least equal to theirs, and their active labours superior, and more useful. Nor am I, my Lord, the Advocate of a levelling principle. In every order of men there must be a subordination; and I am as ready to submit to my Ecclesiastical Superiors, as to acknowledge the necessity of their powers. The Hierarchy should be strenuously supported by every member and friend of the Established Church; and even if the universal patronage of Benefices was vested in the Bishops, and the several Colleges in the Universities, I am disposed to think, the cause of Religion would be better served; and sure I am, that

Merit

Merit would be more frequently rewarded. But let me appeal to your Lordship's candour, whether that multitude of men who fill the numerous Stalls in the several Cathedrals of this Kingdom, some of whom there are who even may be said in some sort to reside, and many more who scarcely ever see the seat from whence they derive their wealth and honours;* whether *they* are in any degree necessary to the welfare of the Hierarchy? Whether they are of any real service to the declining cause of Virtue and Religion? Or rather, on the contrary, they do not bring Religion itself into disrepute, when the most exalted of its Professors

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* For the truth of this observation, your Lordship need only look at the empty stalls in the Cathedral of Llandaff, over which your Lordship presides. There is *not one resident Prebend*. A few meet for *three or four days*, in June, *at their Audit*; and having received their money, hasten to leave the place, where it was originally designed that all, or at least *a certain number of them should be constantly resident*. True it is, indeed, only two of the buildings belonging the Chapter remain habitable; one of which serves for the banqueting room at these annual meetings: the scite of one or two more now forms the gardens of an imperious servant of the Chapter, who is their *plenipotentiary* there. The two Vicars, who *reside constantly*, and officiate alternately, have a very scanty pittance allotted them. The stipend of the junior Vicar does not amount to *forty pounds* a year! and the emoluments of the senior are very inadequate to a life of labour and confinement.

are observed lounging away Life in wealthy indolence and inglorious ease; and exhibiting, at best, but the inanimate picture of *negative Virtue*? When the generality of Mankind take a view of Beings of this description, it is but with too much justice that they question the piety and purity of their principles, who, having attained a state of affluence which precludes solicitude, abandon themselves to the enjoyment of ease and pleasure, and become totally regardless of the important duties of their profession. If these men are really useless in the Community, and in no degree necessary to the well-being of the Hierarchy, why, in the name of Reason, my Lord, should they be continued? Why should they not "*be rooted up*," since it is confessed on all hands, they only "*cumber the ground?*"

This is a question which your Lordship declines deciding upon, in your Letter to the late Primate; but it is the sanguine wish of every man interested in, and concerned for the welfare of the

Church,

Church, that, should a Bill of that nature which your Lordship recommends be brought into Parliament, the Reform may not be limited and partial, but extensive and general ; and that your Lordship will support such a Bill with all the weight that your exalted Station, and more exalted Virtue and Talents, can give it.

The present Archbishop is well spoken of ; and it is probable has Virtue, and a spirit sufficiently independent, to induce him to promote your Lordship's wishes ; but should that not be the fact, why, my Lord, will not *You* introduce the subject into the Senate ? A proposal from *Bishop Watson* cannot but be received with every mark of attention and respect.

But your Lordship, I fear, from what I can gather from the Letter before me, does not seem inclined to favour a total abolition of Deans and Chapters ; and yet the reason you assign for saying little on that subject, should seem to be *that* on which

which your Lordship might have felt yourself differently disposed—“ My business is not so much “ with Deans and Chapters as with a *very useful*, “ with what some may not scruple to call the “ *most useful* part of the Clergy—the *Parochial Clergy.*” Sure I am, that *your Lordship* will not scruple to call them so: and as you confess the provision made for them to be “ scanty and “ mean,” and must be sensible how necessary their respectability is to the interests of Religion and Virtue, I doubt not but you will also acknowledge, that the *whole* revenue of useless Dignitaries *ought* to be applied to the relief of the “ *most useful*,” the *most worthy*, and the *most indigent part* of the Clergy. I know not well what your Lordship may precisely mean by “ *Parochial Clergy*,” but I would hope, that not only the inferior *beneficed Clergy*, but the *worthy* and *industrious Curates* are comprehended in that term. Their situation, my Lord, calls loudly for relief: descended from reputable Parents, possessed of as much Learning as their more fortunate Brethren, and distinguished

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by higher degrees of *positive* virtue, and professional industry, yet destitute of powerful Friends: many of them seem placed in the world, only to prove the miseries of Poverty, and the contempt which is too generally annexed to it.—To obviate this, in some measure, every Diocesan should have a discretionary power vested in him, to allow every Curate a Stipend, bearing a certain proportion to the value of the Benefice. For instance, Livings of 200l. a-year and under, should afford the Curate 50l.; and those of greater value should pay the Curate a *fourth* part of the clear receipts. But there is another evil which this class of the Clergy labour under: Diocesans are not sufficiently strict in insisting on the Curates within their jurisdiction being Licensed; the consequence is, that they are not only obliged to subsist on a wretched pittance, but, like Menials, are under the necessity of seeking *another service*, whenever the caprice of their fickle or eccentric Constituents.

shall dictate their dismission. C **Besides,**

Besides, for want of a due attention to this duty of *Episcopacy*, many *improper* persons are admitted to the best Curacies, to the exclusion of those whose *Merit* and *Education* should have given them the preference. Many are sent from the Clerical Offices,* (which, in their *present state*, reflect no small disgrace on the Clergy in general, and the Bishops in particular), to take charge of extensive and respectable Parishes, who were never *regularly educated* for their Profession; and as many who never were ordained. Would Bishops

* Such offices, under better regulations, would be useful institutions. The beneficed Clergy, and those who have no preferment, but are prepared with fair and regular Testimonials, would equally experience the advantage. The Bishop of *London* has often been blamed for not attending to this evil: but as Curates are sent into *every* Diocese from these offices, it is a duty incumbent on *every* Bishop, to exert himself in remedying an evil so loudly and so justly complained of. Let a *respectable Clergyman* be appointed by the Primate, to preside over the *only* office of this nature that shall be allowed to be opened; and let his recompence arise either from that fund, which may be formed by the application of the revenues of useless Dignitaries, as they become vacant, or let a trifling tax be laid on the non-resident Clergy (which shall be paid in at their respective Visitations) for that purpose: but let not the needy Supplicants contribute, in any degree, to the payment of the Registrar.

refuse the admission of any persons into their respective Dioceses, as officiating Ministers, without having the Nomination of their Constituents to their Curacies, and bringing with them such Testimonials as the Canon Law prescribes, it would be impossible for Imposture to succeed: Letters of Orders must in that case be exhibited to the Bishops themselves, and if the Curates passed from one Diocese to another, their Testimonials must be countersigned by the Bishop of the Diocese from which they emigrate.

These complicated hardships of the Inferior Parochial Clergy, which I have recited, are much to be lamented; and if they are to be lamented, my Lord, should they not be redressed? If the Revenues of the Church were *originally* designed to support and reward a Professional Order of Men set apart for the Service of Religion, why are they not so applied? Why are they not employed in securing the respectability, and rewarding the toils of the most active Labourers in the

Vineyard, instead of pampering the pride, flattering the vanity, and contributing to the ease and indolence of the very drones of Society?—The chief business of the national Clergy falls principally upon the Order of Curates; and they are therefore no less intitled to the respect, than to the pity of their happier Brethren. The mediocrity of their stipends (as a very sensible Writer has before observed) may lessen them in the eyes of the opulent vulgar; who, feeling the obvious good of money, and insensible to other excellence, idolize the sordid pelf, and despise those who are destitute of *that* weighty recommendation, though they are distinguished by every Grace and Virtue that can adorn the Christian Profession. The candid and considerate, however, will consider their Poverty as the source of their chief Honours. Though their Income is less than that of many *Mechanics*, and many fortunate *Pluralists* give more to their *Coachmen* than to their *Curates*, they maintain a decent appearance, and support their credit: and when they perform their arduous

ous duties with conscientious regularity, even had men must yield them an involuntary deference. If, my Lord, the lucrative Sustenances of the Church were always conferred on Men of distinguished Merit and Learning, it would very much weaken every argument which could be advanced against their existence; but your Lordship has not been so careless an observer of what passes in the World, not to have seen, that few, very few are the instances in which Merit and Learning have advanced Men to exalted Stations in the Church; and that, in general, affinity to a Noble Family, or accidental connections with the Great, have supplied the want of more solid recommendations. And this will ever be the case, while the Revenues of the Church are distributed in so unequal a manner.

These, my Lord, are the sentiments of an obscure Minister of the Established Church; and I should consider it as presumption in me to give them,

them, if I did not persuade myself, that the obscurity of an Author will have no tendency to invalidate, in your Lordship's opinion, the force of his arguments, or the justness of his reasoning.

I have the Honour to be,

With the greatest Respect,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

And faithful humble Servant,

PRINTED FOR J. MURRAY, NO. 32, FLEET STREET.

On THURSDAY the 1st of MAY will be published,

PRICE ONE SHILLING,

(TO BE CONTINUED MONTHLY.)

THE FOURTH NUMBER OF A NEW WORK, ENTITLED
THE ENGLISH REVIEW;

ABSTRACT OF ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LITERATURE,
FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL, 1783.

TO THE PUBLIC.

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Society, gives birth to an endless multiplicity of Performances,
which engage the curiosity and illustrate the efforts of men, in their ad-
vances to refinement and perfection.

To exhibit a faithful report of every new Publication, is an undertak-
ing of very extensive utility. It affords the means of instruction to the
studious, and it amuses the idle. It blends knowledge and relaxation;
and ought to hold out and ascertain the progressive improvements, as
well as the reigning follies of mankind. It is, therefore, a matter of
surprise, that two publications only of the Critical kind should have
been able to establish themselves in England. That another should start
for the public approbation, cannot justly be a subject of wonder, in the
present enlarged condition of our Literature. To censure established
Performances might, indeed, lead to a suspicion of Envy, and would
certainly be ungenerous; but to contend with them in Merit ought to be
understood as expressive of a commendable courage, and of a disposition
to excel.

The Work which we announce, while it has in view the general pur-
poses of Science and Literature, in common with the two Literary Jour-
nals that still maintain their importance, is not to be entirely confined
to them. It is, therefore, proper to detail with precision, the objects
which it means to pursue, and to cultivate.

I. It

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Such are the objects which have attracted the attention of the Authors, who have engaged in the THE ENGLISH REVIEW; and, in the prosecution of them, they are sincerely disposed to consult the best purposes of Learning and Patriotism. Unconscious of any improper bias upon their minds, they feel themselves animated to exercise that candour and impartiality, which are so often professed, and so seldom practised. Free and independent of any influence, they will endeavour to deliver their opinions with the respect which they owe to the Public, and with that exact fidelity, and those scrupulous attentions to justice, which ought variably to distinguish their labours. They have no partialities and prejudices to gratify; are not impelled by any motives of faction; and the happiest recompence for which they wish, is the praise of their fellow-citizens.

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